

At the School of Language

Reasons Why Men, Matrons and Maids Pursue the Elusive French :: :: ::

From about 9 o'clock in the morning until a night steady stream of people make their way to the school of languages. Some idea of the cosmopolitan composition of Manhattan's population may be gleaned from the fact that in this one school every race in the world is represented, either by pupils or by teachers, or by both.

Languages are taught here on a scientific system; but science has not been able to eliminate all difficulties by any means. Listen to the remarks of pupils.

"One young French girl is explaining in broken English that her ankles are very tired, that she has been playing the piano to the point of exhaustion. The English girl who is walking with her says 'Ankles' inquiringly, and the French girl, with pretty gestures, persists, pointing to her small wrists.

"Oh, my ankles. Those heavy chords I strike with them hurt me much," she says.

"Two young men are chatting of their adventures.

"I made up my mind," said one, "that an American loses too much who does not understand a little French. The last time I was in Paris I had hardly a word in my vocabulary."

"The day I left I was in a hurry to catch the train. I threw myself into a cab and said to the coachman, 'Vochez, vite, vite.' I made the motion of a departing train. I pointed to my suit case. Then I ended up by shouting, 'I am an American!'

"As soon as I said 'American' he shook his head violently. He knew. He whipped up his horse and landed me at the Jardin de Paris, where the girls dance. I lost my train, but he explained to a friend I

French, and cabby couldn't understand a word. I said to myself: Here is where I help beauty in distress. I am glad I can speak French. After all, it is not money and time thrown away. I go up to her and say politely:

"Mademoiselle!"

"At that 'Mademoiselle' she overwhelmed me with what I took to be delight that at last she had found some one who knew her mother tongue. Incidentally, I might mention that the sight of 'Mademoiselle' with French gestures, cabby gesticulating with a long whip and my appearance as a rescuer had attracted the usual New York crowd.

"They all waited for the dots of rescue. I started to speak in my most fluent school of language manner, and one of those strange paralytic of speech occurred. To save my life I could not remember one word of the language I had so carefully acquired. I knew it all right, for when I got home I chatted to myself for fifteen minutes, but what good did that do afterward?

"Another lame 'Mademoiselle' fell from my lips. The crowd jeered as much as to say: 'It's a pretty poor bluff to work on a defenseless girl!'

"The defenseless girl herself turned her back on me and accepted the attentions of another man whose French came when he wanted it, and who put her in the cab and

plating a summer tour in Europe, and immediately after the holidays begin to study up for the vacation there. Eighty-five per cent. of the scholars are women, principally because women have more time and, particularly in regard to the French language, can make more use of it than men can over there, for shopping, &c.

"Of the other reasons actuating our pupils, some of them consist of practical, universal to them.

"I find that the people of the East are greater students than those of the West. When a Western man goes to Europe for a trip he prefers generally to take a courier along and doesn't bother himself with the language.

"Another mistake persons make who go abroad to stay any length of time is to believe that by entering a pension the cany



THE REASON WHY.

some literary. There are many pupils that come here who can read French perfectly, can translate the most difficult passages of the most abstruse writers, but are absolutely unable to speak a word. This comes merely from lack of training for the ear and is overcome by the class work where not one word of English is allowed to be spoken.

"The greater number of our teachers are unable to speak English. We consider it a great detriment to our work when a man acquires a smattering of English, as many of them do in time, and when that occurs the man is sent back to one of our schools there and another sent in his place.

"Every one of the teachers is proficient in his own native tongue which he teaches. Many of the French teachers are graduates from the lycées, or normal schools, and come to us with their teachers' licenses.

"Again many persons who speak French fluently and enjoy the experience of traveling about Europe without a courier, depending merely on their own resources. However, when they return they soon forget and come here to take a course just to brush up.

"We have on our lists many ladies who come once a year for that purpose, as they feel it is a bad investment to spend so much money in acquiring a language and then lose it through a little lack of practice. If a good French scholar takes one course a year she will find that she will keep what she has learned and will be ready at any time to take a trip abroad and be prepared for any adventure or misadventure.

"Missionaries are among some of our best scholars. As soon as a man is selected to go to any foreign country he wants to know about the language of the country. If he has not time for more than ten or fifteen lessons he takes those and at least has a start.

"Business men come here in the evening when they have got to go to South America or to any country where the knowledge of the language is essential.

"There is one fundamental difference I find in the man and woman. The man rarely comes just for the love of learning or to fit himself to enjoy the literature of a country at first hand. The woman often does, just as she comes because her friends come or because she thinks it is fashionable. I don't care especially about the latter class, for a woman who has a social distinct purpose is not a gratifying pupil.

"In one of the evening classes in English there are a Spaniard, a Mexican, a Chinese, a Japanese and a Syrian. At first there was absolutely no conversation among them. Now they are beginning to converse in the one tongue which has become

acquire the language without studying. I have heard many amusing stories.

"A young man came into one of our classes in Germany; he had gone there to study medicine and had entered a German pension to acquire the language. The family and other boarders were delighted at the prospect of talking English.

"At every meal and whenever he met them they would beg him to let them speak English. The consequence was that he had absolutely no opportunity of acquiring the language himself. The same complaint is heard in Paris, and very often our schools there profit by this condition.

"An interesting fact in regard to the question of accent is that in the English speaking classes in Paris it is almost always necessary to have teachers from England, for most of the Parisians who study the Anglo-Saxon language there are going to London and they do not want the American accent. When they come here, on the contrary, they require it.

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FILIPINOS LEARNING ENGLISH.



THE OBJECT LESSON.

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HIS FRENCH PARALYSIS.

met there, who spoke French, that when I said 'quick' and that I was an American, he thought of course that was where I wanted to go."

"The other adventure was no less fearful. I've taken a course of lessons and got on splendidly," he said. "The other day I was walking along the street, one of the Twenties, East, and I saw a very pretty foreign looking girl having a terrible time with a hansom cabby.

"She was gesticulating and jabbering in

instructed the driver to take her to Forty-second Street.

"But it's all right. I don't let beauty in distress get by me after another course."

"The manager of the school answered various questions about its work.

"We do not pretend to make philologists of our pupils," he said. "We make linguists out of them. That is all. As a general thing the people who come here take lessons for practical reasons.

"They consist of people who are contem-

plated to be directed to the Secretary. The watchman glanced dubiously at a big wooden box under the visitor's arm, looked the thin man over carefully and shook his head. "The Secretary isn't in town," he said at length, "but maybe you can see somebody if you'll tell me your business."

"The thin man looked embarrassed. He shifted from one foot to the other before answering. But finally he gathered his courage together, blushed, fixed a roving eye on the ceiling and said:

"It's about pigs."

"What's about pigs?" asked the astonished watchman.

"What I wanted to see the Secretary about," responded the visitor, still more embarrassed. "You see, out my way they breed."

"Oh," said the watchman, "why didn't you mention it before? You don't want to see the Secretary. You want to go to the Bureau of Animal Industry. Ain't that it?"

"The visitor guessed it was, and the watchman, entirely relieved of his apprehension concerning the unwieldy parcel, smiled knowingly, led the thin man down a corridor and pushed open a door.

"You see," said the visitor to the spectacled scientist behind the desk, after mentioning that his name was Simonson, and that he hailed from "Iowa," "I've got a little idea that I've been working on for some time. I didn't get much encouragement from my neighbors. They said I was crazy, but you can see I'm not. At least, I don't think so [with a return of his diffidence and with another blush], and I thought I'd show you my invention."

got a whole lot of them. Well, it occurred to me about a year ago that the pig was an unnecessarily dirty animal. They just seemed to me to go around looking for mud, and I set out to find a reason for it. I ain't so awful bright, but I didn't take me long to discover that it was heredity that was bothering the pigs. Why, I've seen a pig pass by a pool of fresh, clean water, to wallow in a mud hole. That ain't right. No thinking pig that had the proper ancestry and bringing up should do that; and after seeing that Mr. Darwin's ideas agreed with mine, I set to work and invented this sty.

"I figure out that between ten and fifteen generations of pigs, brought up in the Simonson Improved Darwinian Twentieth Century Sty, would change the habits of the pig completely. In that length of time we would have a breed of clean pigs, pigs that would run a mile to wade in a crystal brook, and would shudder with horror every time they saw a mud hole. The people out my way said I was crazy, so I thought I had better come right on here and see what you thought of my invention."

"The scientist looked earnestly at Mr. Simonson. Then he rose from his chair, and grasped the man from 'Iowa' by the hand.

"I am indeed glad to meet you," he said feelingly. "You are a thinker, and you are thinking in the right direction. You are one of those courageous enough to think for yourself and to take a first and oftentimes difficult step, oblivious of ridicule and scorn. And I say this, notwithstanding the fact that you are too late. Mr. Simonson, the Department of Agriculture has already taken steps to realize the truth of the ideas you advance. Mr. Simonson, the clean pig is on the way; he is now in process of evolution. He will arrive."

Mr. Simonson of Iowa gulped twice and

looked as if he had recently emerged from the business end of a Kansas cyclone.

"And out my way they said I was crazy," he said as if to himself. Then he picked up the model of Simonson's Improved Darwinian Twentieth Century Sty and remarked, still more hesitatingly:

"But perhaps you have overlooked some of the features of this invention. This is what made my neighbors say I was crazy. You see this here cement floor? Well, that prevents the pig from wallowing, and this here pool of clean water in the corner of the sty keeps him cool. The pig is comfortable and clean at the same time, and gradually learns to hate the sight of mud."

"The scientist again arose from his chair and again seized the hand of Mr. Simonson. "Permit me," he said, "to again congratulate a thinker. You have the right idea, Mr. Simonson, but you are too late. The shower bath has taken the place of the stationary tub in pig evolution. It is cleaner and more sanitary, and it teaches the pig not to make too much of a good thing. In the model sty of the Agricultural Department every time the pig wants a bath he stands under the shower and pushes an electric button with his snout."

"Mr. Simonson lapsed into a brown study after the scientist had finished. He didn't come out of it for about five minutes. Then he shook himself together, wiped his brow with a blue handkerchief, laid aside the Simonson Improved Darwinian Twentieth Century Sty and said diffidently:

"I've got another idea I'd like to tell you about. My neighbors said I was crazy, but—"

"Proceed, Mr. Simonson," said the scientist. "The conversation of a thinker is always heard with interest in this department."

"The man from Iowa was encouraged. "Well," he said, "I guess you know all about

grasshoppers. They come around every year or two in swarms, and they're terrible. They destroy the crops, the orchards, and the grass. They mean bankruptcy to the farmer. I have invented a grasshopper and locust destroyer.

"I catch a few of the insects and inoculate them with the Simonson Patent Lightning Bug Plague and let them go. The plague does the rest. Compared to Asiatic cholera it is as the mumps or the chickenpox. The pestilence by the billion. Twenty-four hours after inoculation there is not an insect left alive within miles. My neighbors said I was crazy, but—What do you think of it?"

"Think of it!" said the scientist warmly rising from his seat and once more grasping Mr. Simonson by the hand. "I think you are a thinker. Your neighbors are unenlightened. But I regret to say—for you are a thinker and a scientist, Mr. Simonson—that you are too late. For the past year the Department of Agriculture has been sending to farmers in the afflicted sections tubes of gelatine containing cultures of our new insect Epizootic. Its principles are the same as yours. Again I congratulate you."

"Mr. Simonson of Iowa leaned back in his chair and gazed at the scientist with something like fear in his eyes. The model of the Darwinian Twentieth Century Sty fell to the floor with a bang, but he didn't seem to mind. Finally he looked away and said, more huskily and hesitatingly than before:

"I've got another idea. My neighbors said I was terrible crazy, and they tried to have me sent to the lunatic asylum. It's a lemonade orchard. You plant lemon trees, and when they are young, graft them with sugar cane. By the same methods utilized in rubber forests it will be possible, when the trees reach maturity, to draw off lemon-

ade, thus doing away with the—"

The scientist rose quickly from his chair, walked up and down the room twice. Then once more he seized the hand of the visitor from Iowa. "My dear Mr. Simonson," he said, feelingly, "it is indeed a pleasure to meet a thinker, a scientist. But I very much regret that you are too late—"

But Mr. Simonson wrenched away his hand, gave the improved Darwinian Twentieth Century Sty a kick that smashed it, threw the bottle of Lightning Bug Plague out of the window and dashed into the corridor.

He heard to say, as he passed the watchman at the door, and darted out into the sunshine. "You know that man you took me to? My neighbors said I was crazy, but I'm darned if he ain't crazier than I am."

Easy to Shoot Rattlesnake's Head Off.

From Pearson's Magazine.

In this wide world there are several things that are softer than a rattlesnake, but they can probably be counted on the fingers of one hand. One of these things is a bullet, whereby, having the explanation, it is easy to shoot the head off a rattler although a marksman finds it difficult to place a bullet along the line, seven foot line between the neck of the reptile and the tip of its tail.

It has long been regarded as a curious coincidence that even the man not famed for accuracy has had no trouble in blowing the head off a diamond back. In the diamond back country only one explanation is offered for this: it is the snake and not the man that does the aiming.

At rare quarters, the instant the muzzle of a six-shooter is thrust toward a rattlesnake, the rattler's eye catches the flame and in the fraction of a twink the deadly head has slipped its coils. As the gun roars and darts its tongue of flame, the head of the creature is torn clean as if severed with a knife and the viper lies writhing, emitting a defiant rattle even as its grim, relentless heart ceases its beat.

Bag Game Without Gun or Dogs.

Cookville Correspondence, Nashville American.

Mrs. Owen, who lives three miles north of town, came in this morning with fifteen quail, eleven rabbits and two squirrels, and when asked how she killed so many stated that her method was to get on the rail yesterday afternoon (Sunday) without dogs, track a covey of quail into a brush pile and killed fifteen by getting on the rail and jumping up and down.

They killed a number of rabbits in the same manner, and still others by chasing them into dens and twisting them out with long forked sticks. The squirrels were killed by getting them into hollow trees and twisting them out in the same manner as the rabbits.

The Aquarist's Hatchery.

New in Its Third Season, With Eggs of Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout and Sculpin.

The Aquarium's fish hatchery, whose troughs and jars are installed on the coping surrounding the alligator and crocodile pool, has now been set in operation again for its third season. Some of its troughs contain brook trout eggs. The number of 10,000 from the United States Government fish hatchery at St. Albans, N.Y., while in other troughs have been placed 10,000 rainbow trout eggs from the Government hatchery at Wytheville, Va.

In the case of all fish eggs, the period of incubation varies, more or less, according to the temperature of the water in which the eggs are placed. In water at the temperature at which it is used at the Aquarium, both brook and rainbow trout eggs hatch out in about ninety days. The eggs in the hatchery here were somewhat advanced in incubation when received, so that they are expected to hatch out the last of February or early in March.

In the first jar to be set in operation have been placed 150,000 sculpin eggs, secured by sculpin in the Aquarium tanks. The period of incubation of sculpin eggs is about seventy-five days.

Later there will be placed in the hatchery troughs and jars, eggs of the lake trout and lake whitefish, and of Atlantic and other salmon, and of brown trout and various other species of fishes.

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I do? "Monsieur, you open the window." "Bien, mesdemoiselles! I open the window. Mademoiselle, what is it that you have in your muff?"

"Monsieur, I have my hand in my muff." "Bien. Ladies, she has her hand in her muff," says the professor, with a little languishing air as he gazes at the muff and its hidden contents.

In another room the pupils are more advanced. A young woman, blonde, with a little touch of Parisian grace about her costume, stands at the blackboard. Among the pupils is an elderly gentleman, florid, graceless and a bon vivant. You cannot help wondering at the reason for his close attention at these early morning lessons. Is it that perchance Madame the wife has a French maid? Perish the thought!

The Parisian articulates: "Je—a long interval—"t'aimé. Je t'aimé. Ready!"

The old gentleman speaks. "Gee." "Non, non, not Gee, Je!"

"Oui." He wipes his heated brow. "Gee," a gasp, "tem, tem, tem!"

In still another class one pursues the Parisian accent under the instruction of another handsome professor.

"Mademoiselle," in an accent that suggests the divine Sarah, "is it that St. Petersburg is near New York?"

The answer comes quickly. "Oui, professeur. St. Petersburg is very near New York."

"Non! Non! Encore! Is it that Chicago is near New York?"

"No, sir; Chicago is very far from New York."

"Non! Non! Encore!"

Still again one listens to the reasons that bring to the school women of the class popularly supposed to be in bed at this early hour or preparing for the luncheon party or some other form of amusement. One is telling her experiences in a Paris pension:

"I just knew enough of the language to tell the man that I wanted the lock of the trunk fixed. It took him the better part of a day and three times he left, each time bringing some one to help him.

"When they had finished I had wasted all that time and I offered the two francs I had agreed upon with some hesitancy. The man took it and began to gesticulate violently. They all gesticulated.

"I would not pay more. I had agreed for that sum and I was so mad at losing my beautiful day watching them fiddle about that I would have gone to prison.

"I tried to make them understand, but without success. They all talked together, waved their hands and made things very

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